

JOIN THE VOICES FOR RECOVERY

The personal narratives of people in recovery across the country are powerful. These triumphant stories give hope to those facing substance use disorders and show the possibilities for people who commit to recovery. Read on for some of these unique stories, and share them with others during this year's **National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)**, which celebrates how recovery heals lives, families, and communities. Help others find the courage and confidence to share their stories and inspire even more people to celebrate recovery in the community.

Dave and Lisa Phillips

Recovery Advocates

Life is certainly a process, one that is continuously changing. And with each change, we have been offered unexpected opportunities for growth. Where we stand today is far removed from our position 14 years ago when we took our third step together. We had no idea

of the blessings that were to come. Our lives have changed dramatically. We have gone from the “Bonnie and Clyde” of Cleveland to providing hope for other families suffering from abuse and addiction. The dynamics of addiction and the concepts of a family disease are epitomized in our family. While we come from very different backgrounds, we were raised in alcoholic homes and have passed that legacy to our children. Of our six children, two are in recovery and one has chosen not to use. Our hope is to break the cycle for our grandchildren, since we now have the tools for living a life free from addiction and all the insanity associated with it.



Carol A. Salter

National Director

Easter Seals

I was a late bloomer, taking my first drink at 26 years old (a double tequila slammer), which was the beginning of a quick trip toward the bottom. I was divorcing my husband, raising three small children alone, unemployed, on welfare, and living in emergency housing. Even after I found a minimum wage job, my life situation did not greatly improve, and I continued to be a heavy maintenance drinker, adding the abuse of prescription drugs to my life story. Because of the availability of drug and alcohol counseling and a 12-step program, I celebrated 15 years of being clean and sober on August 28, 2004. I am now a national director in a national non-profit organization and celebrate my sobriety as a successful leader, providing services to low-income seniors who seek employment. My story can be anyone's story if they have the opportunity to access affordable and accessible drug and alcohol treatment programs.





John de Miranda

Executive Director

National Association on Alcohol, Drugs and Disability

In 1974, I walked into a hospital-based treatment program and started a recovery that has just passed 30 years. My life in recovery has included working in the addictions field in a wide variety of positions, including teacher, trainer, researcher, and advocate. Along the way, I have met thousands of individuals who are living proof that recovery happens every day through an incredible array of pathways. For me, one of the most exciting developments has been the emergence of a new, nationwide recovery movement that gives people in recovery and their allies an opportunity to advocate for the civil rights of alcoholics and drug addicts.



Deirdre Drohan Forbes

Activist, Advocate, Mother, Counselor, Student

I had my last drink 17 years ago and started down my personal road to recovery. Ten years later, the depression I must have been plagued with all along, yet never recognized, became so intense I required hospitalization. Slowly I began to walk the recovery path of co-occurring disorders. Now that I have gotten the help I needed from professionals, medication, my wonderful mutual-support system and my family, my dual recovery has opened doors I never thought of entering. I returned to school to be certified as a chemical dependency counselor and recently entered a graduate school of social work. I became a board member of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence/Westchester, Inc. I founded Friends and Voices of Recovery, an advocacy recovery group in my community, and became active in a movement to educate parents and young people about underage drinking. Over a period of almost one and a half years, my family, which had been consumed by one member's worst struggles with the disease, miraculously witnessed the beginnings of her recovery through treatment and medication management. While life can still be difficult, recovery has given me and my family the tools to meet those challenges and actively participate in life, rather than watch it go by.



Dana Moulton

Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery (MOAR)

Project Assistant

When I was a 14-year-old kid, I thought that because I got stoned every day, it meant that I was king of the world. But by the time I finished school I was not only a pothead, I had also become a heroin addict and realized that the life of a drug addict wasn't so glamorous. My life became a 30-year cycle of incarcerations and alienation from my family. I was thoroughly engulfed in the subculture of addiction. Fortunately, after faltering many times, I found the treatment method that was right for me. Now I have a job and a family and hope for the future. I would never have had the joy of recovery were it not for substance abuse services provided in the state of MA. My heartfelt prayer is that those services will be there for others to have, so that they too may know the happiness of a new life with hope and a future that is bright with recovery.



A. Thomas McLellan, Ph.D.

Professor, Department of Psychiatry

University of Pennsylvania

Director, Treatment Research Institute

I suppose most people who are not in recovery wonder what would happen if their spouse stopped drinking. That may be worrisome to a spouse who is not in recovery—that some opportunity for normal enjoyment will be taken away if someone removes alcohol from their life and becomes abstinent. But my wife is not simply abstinent from drugs and alcohol—she is in recovery. There is a big difference between abstinence (the absence of alcohol) and recovery (the replacement of alcohol with a lifestyle that is more sustaining). She doesn't just "not drink"—she helps others, values friendships, is grateful for what we have, and is legitimately happy for the good things that happen to others. These qualities started out as a way of protecting her from missing the alcohol and drugs she stopped—but now they are qualities that give her and me daily enjoyment. I can always tell when she needs a support group meeting and I can always tell when she has come from a meeting—there is a palpable feeling of calmness, but also energy and enthusiasm.



Lionese Robinson

Assistant to the Director

Star of Hope Men's Center

It all started when I was a child; my father, though a great provider, was an alcoholic. Familiar with alcohol and chaos, I married a dealer who introduced me to drugs as our status changed to the finest homes, cars, and education money could buy. Exaggerated attention and prestige moved me to a distorted perception of myself and my life began to spiral out of control. Before it was over I attempted suicide, then went to prison for a probation violation. As my addiction progressed and I couldn't find work anymore, I found myself out on the streets for days looking for drugs. I entered treatment three times, only to relapse weeks after discharging. An agonizing 20 years seeking emotional relief from crack cocaine, 3 children and a divorce later, I surrendered to win at the Star of Hope. The one thing I still had was my mother's faith. She taught us to rise above not with our own strength, but to rely on the power of the Lord. I believe that any person can become an addict, but no matter what circumstances lead to addiction, recovery is possible.



Hon. Terry H. Gamber

Resident Circuit Judge

Circuit Court of Illinois

Jefferson County Courthouse

Serving as the presiding judge in cases dealing with offenders recovering from alcohol and drug addiction is both challenging and rewarding. As judge, my role is to encourage and support recovery, and develop a sense of trust and responsibility in offenders. I remind offenders they don't always have the choice of their circumstances, but they do have the choice in how they handle them.

It is essential that I treat each individual with dignity and respect, and respond to the needs that are unique to each person. Encouragement, support, and praise have a remarkably positive effect on people struggling to recover.



Tim Hamilton

*Director of the Dual Recovery Empowerment Foundation
and National Mental Health Association, Board Member and
Chair of the Task Force on Substance Related
and Co-Occurring Interactive Disorders*

Today, I share my dual recovery in my writing, conference and workshop programs, and committee meetings. My dual recovery began in 1973, through an addiction program, halfway house, and the 12 Steps. Following addiction training, I worked in prevention and treatment programs. During the mid-1980s, I began experiencing multiple symptoms of major depression, attention deficit disorder, visual disturbance similar to an ongoing LSD flashback, and auditory hallucinations. Despite my efforts with professional help and medication options, the symptoms became more severe. Eventually, I was too impaired to continue working. Following a suicide crisis, I experienced renewed empowerment to pursue my recovery. In time, I found professional help and new medications to manage my symptoms. Also, I found support in a small group who wanted to form a dual recovery fellowship. Today, I have recovered myself, my ability to hope, cope, heal and improve my inner quality of life, as I manage two “no fault” illnesses together.



Deni Carise, Ph.D.

*Director, Treatment Systems Section
Treatment Research Institute
University of Pennsylvania*

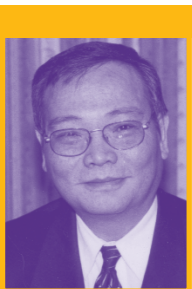
As the director of the Treatment Systems Section at the Treatment Research Institute in Philadelphia, I am able to impact the substance abuse field in a way I never thought would be possible. Until I stopped using drugs and alcohol, I wasn't able to even finish a college semester. Twenty years ago, broke and addicted, I received federally subsidized outpatient substance abuse treatment. I could attend individual counseling sessions for only \$5 and group counseling for just \$3.50, and I was able to get sober because of it. I went on to college, got my Ph.D., and in my career, I'm able to spend time trying to increase the quality, effectiveness, and availability of substance abuse treatment. For me, it's time to stop worrying that being open about my recovery could harm my job opportunities. The public knows that people abusing drugs and alcohol do stupid things. What they won't see if we don't show them, is that people in recovery can go on to do amazing things. Treatment can work—people do change—and we should let our voices be heard.



Roger A. Zellars

Recovery Advocate

I am a Vietnam veteran and a recovering alcoholic with 20 years of sobriety, and I have worked at Prospect House, a long-term residential treatment program, for 19 years, counseling and helping men get their lives back on track. Vietnam was the starting point of my alcoholism; my Vietnam experience changed my life forever. After I left the Army, I had to adapt to life all over again. By this time, drinking had become a major part of my life. Although I went to college and earned a degree, my drinking would eventually spiral out of control. Not realizing it, I was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Finally, I became tired of being tired, and met someone who talked about treatment at the Veteran's Administration facility. I decided to try it. In the beginning of my treatment I was hostile and angry, but with the help of a very good counselor I soon learned about the disease I was suffering from, and began my journey in recovery. Ultimately, I founded Faces & Voices of Recovery in Cincinnati, Ohio, and have been doing recovery advocacy ever since.



George Tan

Manager of a Printing Company

My drinking had become a very significant part of my social life, but it began to negatively affect my health and marriage. I went through 15 admissions to inpatient detoxification before I finally achieved and maintained recovery from alcohol in 2003. By then, I had been at almost every hospital in New York State. I want to thank the program staff for helping me regain confidence by giving me support with patience, love, and professional knowledge. I thank God. I was in bondage to alcohol for 36 years, but now I am free. I have a goal in life, and I have total acceptance from my family.